

LIFE QUESTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL BOYS

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INTRODUCTION

1. These brief outlines of discussions have been prepared at the request of Mr. David R. Porter, secretary in charge of the work in preparatory and high schools of the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations, and to Mr. Porter I owe many valuable suggestions. The method of treatment, as well as the topics themselves, have been the outcome of experiences as a boy, as a teacher, as a father. At the age when most boys are in the preparatory and high schools these great fundamental moral questions must come before them. They will be thought of; they will be answered. It is of vital importance that they be answered wisely.

2. Sometimes parents and teachers have thought it best to impose upon young men their opinions, and to attempt to compel them to form right habits under the pressure of authority; but an action compelled has, relatively speaking, little educative force. At times these questions are ignored, it being thought that as the result of experience and of the best public opinion the right answers will eventually be found. In very many cases this is doubtless true, but very generally at a great waste of energy and often thru many sad, if not seriously demoralizing, experiences. The only safe way, and even that will not always be found effective, is for the boys to think thru these questions for themselves. When, as the result of deliberate consideration, possibly given under suggestive guidance, a boy is once convinced as to what is right and wise and determines

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that he will follow wisdom and righteousness, there need be little fear for him thereafter. In this course, as far as possible, the attempt has been made to follow out this last plan, and to guide the boys in the way of independent, wise thinking.

3. Not much reading has been suggested. In addition to their school work not much reading can be expected of boys. A little from the Bible, a little from two or three thoughtful, interesting writers, especially Emerson and Bacon, who are likely to stimulate independent thinking instead of attempting to impose their views, have been considered sufficient. On special topics where technical knowledge is required, the selection of reading has been left to the discretion of the leader of the group of boys, who knows his men and their local environment and who can best judge just what should be done.

4. These questions are not primarily religious. In none of our states is the teaching of religion in schools formally recognized. It is sometimes forbidden, and no effort should be made to bring in surreptitiously topics that are openly by law forbidden. On the other hand it must be recognized, as we do recognize in most of our state constitutions, that religion, and especially the Christian religion, is the foundation of most that is best in our morals and in our social life to-day, and that the life of Jesus has affected profoundly the views of western civilization. Here and there this fact will appear naturally in the lessons. It is well to have the boys find an application of the principles which they think out, in the lives and works of not merely great religious teachers, but also of the great men in the fields of business and politics.

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5. Unless some care is taken by the teacher, the boys may discuss these questions at considerable length and perhaps even receive many stimulating ideas without taking the trouble to formulate definitely their own views. Moreover, unless some thought is given to the work by the leader, the topics may be discussed thoroly perhaps for an hour, but then will be dropped from the minds of the boys. It will probably be best, therefore, for the leader near the close of the day's discussion to take up the subject that will follow at the next meeting, outline it briefly, ask suggestive questions, and assign more or less formally to different members of the group some of the topics in the discussion of which they will be expected to take the lead at the next meeting. In this way some phase of the subject will lie in the boy's mind for a week, and he will have an opportunity, if he wishes, to talk it over with his friends and relatives, to read about it, and somewhat definitely to formulate his own opinions.

6. In order to secure precision in thinking and to preserve a record of the suggestive thoughts of others, blank leaves are inserted, so that the boys may put down their thoughts systematically while preparing for or at the time of the discussions. Such books, laid away perhaps for a period of years, will often prove suggestive, fruitful and helpful in later life.

7. It is of prime importance that the leader of the group stand well in the confidence of the boys with whom he is working. These questions are all life questions. They all touch boys closely. They will talk them over among themselves at any rate. It is much better if the teacher can get them to talk them over freely with him. He should not attempt to

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force his own opinions upon the boys. He should even, as far as possible, concede to the boys the strength of their arguments when they differ from him. On few of the questions under discussion is there an absolute right or an absolute wrong; and of greater importance than a conclusion that seems to him right, is the acquirement by himself as well as by the boys of a tolerant spirit. The man who can secure the hearty good-will and liking of the boys and their belief in his fairmindedness as well as in his goodness of heart, has secured a hold that in the long run will be worth far more than the inculcation of any opinion.

I

RELATION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL TO
LIFE

"A boy is better unborn than untaught." EMERSON.

"Provided always the boy is teachable (for we are not proposing to make a statue out of punk), football, cricket, archery, swimming, skating, climbing, fencing, riding, are lessons in the art of power, which it is his main business to learn." EMERSON.

"He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul; but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding." PROVERBS, 15:32.

"Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge." PROVERBS, 23:12.

REFERENCES

- Emerson: Culture.
- Mathews: Chap. 5.
- Bacon: Of Youth and Age.
- Matthew, 25.

I

RELATION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL TO LIFE

1. The opportunities for securing a good position in business with a manufacturer, merchant, lawyer, doctor, farmer, increase with the training of the applicant. Most business men require letters of recommendation from teachers, former employers, or others, who know regarding training and experience.

In the Baldwin Locomotive Works at Philadelphia, for example, apprentices are classified in three groups: those who have had a college training; those who have had a high school training; those who have had neither: and the wages and the opportunities for advancement depend upon this training.

2. The chances of success in business increase with the training, altho, of course, in lines of business in which much book-learning is not required, the training and discipline is rather that of experience. Mr. Carnegie and Mr. Schwab, for example, were very successful as steel manufacturers, altho neither had a college training. Both, however, are men of extraordinary ability who have since acquired much literary skill from wide reading and practice. It will be found usually that the proportion of college men who have made a great success in business is far beyond their proportion in the community at large.

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Business men without school training find themselves greatly hampered. I have known skilled civil engineers to hire high school boys to correct their English in preparing bids for contracts, and a successful merchant to ask a college professor to write him out a speech to be delivered before a grocers' association.

3. The ease and success of work in college is largely a matter of good preparation. A student's first term in college usually fixes his status thruout his course, altho the ablest men, if hampered by poor preparation, may in the course of time overcome the disadvantage.

4. Note the men in your home community who have the greatest influence and the most respected positions and see how many of them are men of education. Is not the proportion of educated men of influence far above that of the uneducated, compared with their relative numbers in the community?

Be careful, however, not to over-estimate the value of school education. What is the source of influence in the community of the strong men of little school education? Is it wealth? Is it high character? Is it a helpful spirit?

5. Our enjoyment of life comes largely from the gratification of our tastes. A man who has a taste for literature, or music, or art, or science, has a source of enjoyment that others lack. His life is so much the richer.

Why does not a taste for strong drink, a

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source of enjoyment unknown to those who lack it, have the same good effect? If a pleasure shortens life or brings after it troubles and sorrows that in the long run more than counterbalance the enjoyment, is it wise to take that pleasure?

Is it wise to make one's life richer and better by cultivating tastes of a higher type that give enjoyment without evil results? What tastes?

6. The period of youth is often spoken of as the time of happiness. But is this right? As one grows older, if his life has been right, he usually acquires some wealth, more influence, more power. Does he not also gain added enjoyment?

Ought not the last ten years of life to be the richest and best in experience, and in enjoyment?

7. The experiences of later life, however, depend, of necessity, largely upon health, and character, and position—all of which are dependent largely, if not primarily, upon the habits and training of youth, and upon the associations made then. The feeling that some boys have that they will be good later, will join a church when old, and will be reckless in youth, comes from mistaken views as to the real nature of the enjoyments of a good life and of the likelihood of changes of habit in later life. "As the twig is bent the tree is inclined."

Is not, therefore, the high school age perhaps the period of greatest importance in life, tho not the one that marks the culmination of either influence or enjoyment?

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II

CUSTOM: HABIT

"We pray to be conventional. But the wary Heaven takes care that we shall not be, if there is anything good in you." EMERSON.

"Since custom is the principal magistrate of man's life, let men by all means endeavor to obtain good customs." BACON.

"Custom is most perfect when it beginneth in young years." BACON.

"If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye amazed at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day?"

"Judge ye not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." JOHN, 7:23, 24.

"And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own traditions." MARK, 7:9.

REFERENCES

Smiles: Character. Chap. 3.

Emerson: Manners.

Bacon: Of Custom and Education.

Ecclesiastes, 1:2.

II

CUSTOM: HABIT

1. Far more than we realize we are creatures of custom. The style of our clothing, the type of our houses, our food, our amusements, our kind of education, our religion, are taken by most of us from the customs of our time and country.

Many customs and styles had a use and meaning originally which now have been lost.

Why does a Prince Albert coat have buttons on the back?

Why do tailors usually put a notch in the collar of the coat?

Why are most people in Italy Roman Catholics; in England Protestants? Is the difference one of character?

2. There are certain advantages usually found in following the customs of our fellows:

(a) Probably the customs are, or at any rate have been, wise—the result of experience. For example, our houses and clothing are adapted to our climate and to the season of the year. The food which we customarily use is, probably, under most circumstances, healthful.

(b) If one does not follow the usual style he is looked upon as odd. He will be ridiculed. The city boy is likely to laugh at the country boy as boorish and uncultivated. The fact is, the customs of the country boy are just as good and just as sensible, but they are different. If the city boy

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goes to the country and attempts to play the part of a country boy, he is equally ridiculous. I may laugh at a Chinaman because he is awkward in using his fork and knife at table; the Chinaman would probably be too courteous to laugh at me because I could not use chopsticks.

(c) Our social customs, of whatever kind, are likely to prevent misunderstandings, and hence avoid difficulties. The position of the young man and woman when waltzing is proper, only because customary. Otherwise, would it be misunderstood?

3. Owing to our lack of personal independence we often follow customs to an unwise extent:

(a) Americans in tropical climates at times wear heavy black coats and stiff shirts; likewise they retain the food and habits of a colder climate. Many people, from pride, follow wedding customs, funeral customs, and other ceremonies at great cost and even injury to their families, because they are too cowardly not to follow custom.

(b) In many instances custom prevents beneficial action and even progress. Because a man has not a customary evening suit, he refuses a desirable invitation. Because a low mark in school has become fashionable, thru the influence of some careless, tho perhaps strong boys, poor work is deliberately done. The custom of keeping the Sabbath among the ancient Jews was so rigidly fixed that it took the wonderful originality and

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independence of spirit of Jesus Christ even "to do good on the Sabbath day."

(c) Much of our business and politics is carried on in ways that are customary, but not the best. Only the original man in business, if he is also sensible, is the man who makes a great success; the common man makes a bare living or fails.

The large majority of voters follow their party without thought; this mental laziness is indirectly the source of much political corruption.

(d) Many people are too cowardly even to do right, if that involves a break with custom. Do the majority of high school boys learn to smoke, or swear, or drink, because these things are natural, or because the boys have not the independence of character to defy custom?

4. We are so constituted that by repetition an action becomes a habit, and that is an important matter for either good or evil.

(a) Habit has the very great advantage of increasing skill and saving energy. It is only thru habit that we can read without spelling out words; that a ball player gets his wonderful skill so that he judges the position of a ball to a fraction of an inch or a hundredth of a second. Thru habit only can a person become accurate in the use of figures or in reasoning. Success in every line, physical, or mental, or even moral, is largely dependent upon habit.

(b) The disadvantage lies in the difficulty of breaking a bad habit. This can usually best be

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done by substituting a good one. A great stride forward is made toward success in any line when we deliberately make ourselves create good habits and break bad ones. There could be no better exercise for a club than for each member to try to break off some habit, even tho it be so slight a thing as the use of a favorite slang word, and to create some good habit, even tho it be so slight a thing as to get to breakfast on time. The experiences along both lines would serve to emphasize both the difficulty of breaking a habit, and the importance, and perhaps even the ease, of acquiring a habit.

(c) There is perhaps no greater fault in students than the lack of concentration of attention and energy—the habit of letting one's attention be diverted by little things from the work in hand. In order to get the control desirable to make a habit at will, one should practice concentration or attention upon the thing in hand, whether work or play. A very able student fixed the number of minutes to be assigned to preparing each lesson, in order that during these few minutes, under pressure of necessity, the habit of concentration might be formed. It is useful to practice studying in the midst of a hubbub in order to force on oneself the power of concentration. Concentration of attention and will is the key to the control of habit.

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III

SOCIETIES: CLIQUES: FRATERNITIES

“It is always a practical difficulty with Clubs to regulate the laws of selection so as to exclude peremptorily every social nuisance.” EMERSON.

“It is possible that the best conversation is between two persons who can talk only to each other.” EMERSON.

“Jesus spent his life in discoursing with humble people on life and duty, in giving wise answers, showing that he saw at a large angle of vision, and at least silencing those who were not generous enough to accept his thought.” EMERSON.

“I find out in an instant if my companion does not want me, and ropes cannot hold me when my welcome is gone.” EMERSON.

“Society we must have; but let it be society, and not exchanging news, or eating from the same dish.” EMERSON.

“Every man brings into society some partial thought and local culture. We need range and alternation of topics.”

“It is a mere and miserable solitude to want true friends, without which the world is but a wilderness.” BACON.

REFERENCES

Emerson: Clubs.

Bacon: Of Counsel.

Proverbs, 4.

III

SOCIETIES: CLIQUES: FRATERNITIES

1. The desire to be with congenial people leads naturally to the formation of either formal or informal groups, or classes, or cliques, or societies. This is found everywhere, in clubs, churches, business organizations. In the period of high school life, however, such grouping needs to be carefully studied, for it has in it much that is evil as well as much that is good.

2. There are great advantages in this grouping of people, whether it comes about without effort, or whether a society is formally created.

(a) The close association of congenial people who become warm friends, if they are people of the right type, is beneficial. Friendships are often made that last thru life, and nothing is to be prized more highly than friendships of the right type.

(b) Many associations have as their aim something uplifting and ennobling, like charity organizations, educational clubs, churches; and if these aims are followed, members of the association may well get a stimulus and an uplift toward the better things of life that will afterward prove extremely helpful.

(c) For the carrying out of work among numbers of people, organization is often helpful. In the planning and work of organization and thru the organization, the habit of leadership and dis-

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cipline is sometimes formed, a benefit not to be overlooked. The well-organized group is the one that wins in a competitive contest.

3. Many associations, both in the high school and elsewhere, have serious disadvantages.

(a) Frequently, owing to the rivalry for membership or to carelessness in selection, persons are brought into the association who are not congenial and sympathetic, and who, because of the formal organization, cannot be dropped as easily as when the grouping is purely informal or instinctive; sometimes members are persons whose influence is even distinctly bad and demoralizing, but the difficulties of getting free from their association are no less. The difficulty of choosing right associates is often too great for persons not of mature years.

(b) In high schools and colleges, as well as in social life, the expense of societies is often considerable, usually more than is anticipated when one enters them. This expense often lays a serious burden upon the shoulders of persons who ought not to carry it, merely because they are unwilling that their children should not be brought up in the relationships they desire. Without fraternities or clubs, the children might easily be friends and associates. When some join these organizations, the parents of others must either see their children separated in part from former relationships, or must bear the burden of the expense of the society.

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(c) Where formal organization is encouraged, the tendency is toward exclusiveness, with the selection of members not always on the highest grounds, and a large amount of snobbishness toward outsiders is frequently the result.

(d) If our associations are largely confined to a few people, we soon become so familiar with their habits of thinking and their ways of living that, altho the association may be very pleasant, it teaches us very little and gives us little intellectual stimulus. We learn more by meeting many people of different types, and tastes, and associations, than from confining our interests to a few. We can get many of the advantages of travel by extending our acquaintance widely. When we go abroad we often deliberately seek the poorer and uncultivated classes in order to benefit by learning strange customs. We could often learn about as much by making friends among those at home whose habits of living and working and thinking are different from ours.

4. A good exercise would be to investigate the clubs and fraternal orders in the home town, and the high school and college fraternities, in order to see the nature of the benefits and disadvantages which come to the members thru these associations.

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IV

INTOXICATING LIQUORS AND TOBACCO

“But it is a safer conclusion to say, ‘This agreeth not well with me, therefore I will not continue it,’ than this, ‘I find no offence of this, therefore I may use it.’ ” BACON.

“Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.

“Be not among wine-bibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh:

“For the drunkard and glutton shall come to poverty and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.” PROVERBS, 23: 19-21.

REFERENCES

Mathews: Chap. 4.

Bacon: Of Regiment of Health.

Luke, 7: 31-50.

IV

INTOXICATING LIQUORS AND TOBACCO

1. Possibly the chief objection to the use of intoxicating liquors and tobacco is that the use becomes a habit which is very difficult to break, and that, owing to the effect upon one's physical constitution, the tendency is strongly toward the use of an increasing quantity in order to get the desired satisfaction. The younger and less mature the person is, the stronger are these tendencies and the more rapid the evil results.

According to the best medical authorities there is no advantage whatever, from the physical point of view, to be gained by the use of any of these articles by normal young persons, tho they realize the benefit to be gained at times in illness.

2. It is sometimes asserted that the use of intoxicating liquors stimulates the imagination and the intellect so that one can do his best work when under the influence of liquor, and the examples of Poe, Daniel Webster, and others are cited in proof. The same argument might be used, with probably even greater emphasis, regarding the use of opium. The truth is that when a person has become addicted to the use of these drugs and his constitution has become warped by them, he sometimes cannot do his best work without them because he has already become abnormal. This is no proof that if he had remained normal he could not have done as good or even better work. For

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one illustration like those given above, dozens could easily be cited of as great or greater work by people in normal condition. Probably no example can be found of a person doing a piece of sustained, difficult work under the influence of liquor. Such work must be done under normal conditions. Our greatest statesmen and ablest politicians of both the earlier and later days, with very rare exceptions, have all been temperate men, often practically teetotalers. Often, like Roosevelt, they do not even smoke. It is a mistaken notion that to deal with men and politicians one must join in such practices. David B. Hill, the greatest democratic leader of New York State in the present generation, uses neither tobacco nor strong drink. Can there be a great religious or social leader who is intemperate in any particular?

3. The evil influence of drinking intoxicating liquors is intensified by the fact that in drinking places, saloons, one usually meets associations that are degrading rather than elevating. Altho, of course, every one knows that some people who drink to excess, or many saloon keepers, have excellent personal qualities, their influence, on the whole, is likely to be bad.

4. The custom of treating, which comes from a good inclination toward sociability and generosity, has an evil influence in leading toward excessive use.

Is there an element of heroism in refusing to

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accept a treat in a company where treating is customary, or is it snobbishness?

May a man be so generous in his treating as to be unjust to his family or creditors? Is this common?

5. For most young men the expense of either habit, even tho it does not lead to immoderate use, is nevertheless a heavy burden. Figure out the cost to the average smoker or the moderate drinker for a period of ten years, computing interest on the investment at the market rate. Is saving this expense to be looked upon as stinginess or as praiseworthy thrift?

6. A very serious disadvantage of the use, especially of intoxicating liquors, to boys is the effect which it has upon prospective employers. Many of our best railroads and business houses employ only temperate men, some of them only teetotalers. Some saloon keepers insist that their bartenders be teetotalers. The tendency is rapidly increasing to put in responsible positions only men who are practically teetotalers.

7. Worst of all, perhaps, is the fact that the use of intoxicants perverts the moral sense, as for that matter does any dominating passion. So to a man who has taken a few drinks of liquor, tho he is not really drunk, many acts will sometimes appear right, even praiseworthy, that at other times he knows to be wrong. The effect of opium is even more direct and powerful.

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8. Every one would concede the pleasure given from the gratification of one's taste in the case of both these habits. When one considers the added pain that comes from a physical breakdown, and the shortening of life that frequently comes, one sees that the added pleasure in life from these habits is likely to be more than offset by the lessened pleasure from the gratification of other tastes that are not themselves detrimental.
9. Make out a list of a dozen habits, good and bad, found in high school life, with a brief statement of the immediate and permanent gratification and cost both in money and in other effects of each.

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V

PROFANITY AND SLANG

“A man’s power to connect his thought with its proper symbol, and so to utter it, depends upon the simplicity of his character, that is, upon his love of truth, and his desire to communicate it without loss.” EMERSON.

“The corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language.” EMERSON.

“Picturesque language is at once a commanding certificate that he who employs it is a man in alliance with truth and God.” EMERSON.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.” EXODUS, 20:7.

“But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” MATTHEW, 5:37.

REFERENCES

Emerson: Language.

Bacon: Of Discourse.

James, 3.

PROFANITY AND SLANG

1. Speaking generally, there is no better test of refinement and cultivation, perhaps even of character, than the use of language. This test covers both the tone of voice and the selection of words.

Does a good disposition show in tone?

How does a bully's voice betray character?

2. It is not given to every person to make literature in the best sense of the word. Many people have not the necessary imagination or experience in life, but with some care and training every person who thinks clearly can make himself clearly understood. For most purposes a simple, clear, direct manner is by far the best in both speaking and writing. Careful, accurate distinctions in thought demand a very careful use of words in order that the different shades of meaning be clearly expressed.

3. Probably the chief disadvantage in the use of slang comes from the fact that the one slang word, which every one grants may be very picturesque and expressive in a particular case, is made to do service in many cases, so that the meaning is obscured. The habit of using slang breeds carelessness about enlarging the vocabulary or noting carefully the exact meaning of words. It is said that Wendell Phillips throughout his early years never permitted himself the use of

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slang, in order that the habit of accurate, careful expression might be fixed. His marvelous success as an orator in later years depended largely upon the ease and grace with which he expressed his thoughts without previous preparation.

4. Uncultivated people who swear make a few oaths take the place of hundreds of words which would express nice discriminations of thought. Most swearers do not show wickedness by their oaths, for their words are thoughtlessly uttered; they show merely ignorant, vulgar stupidity. Deliberate cursing or blaspheming is, of course, irreverent and sinful, and in some countries and states it is unlawful and punishable as a misdemeanor. The injunction of Jesus, "Let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay," is primarily good sense rather than religion.

5. Swearing is sometimes defended on the ground that certain great men have had that habit.

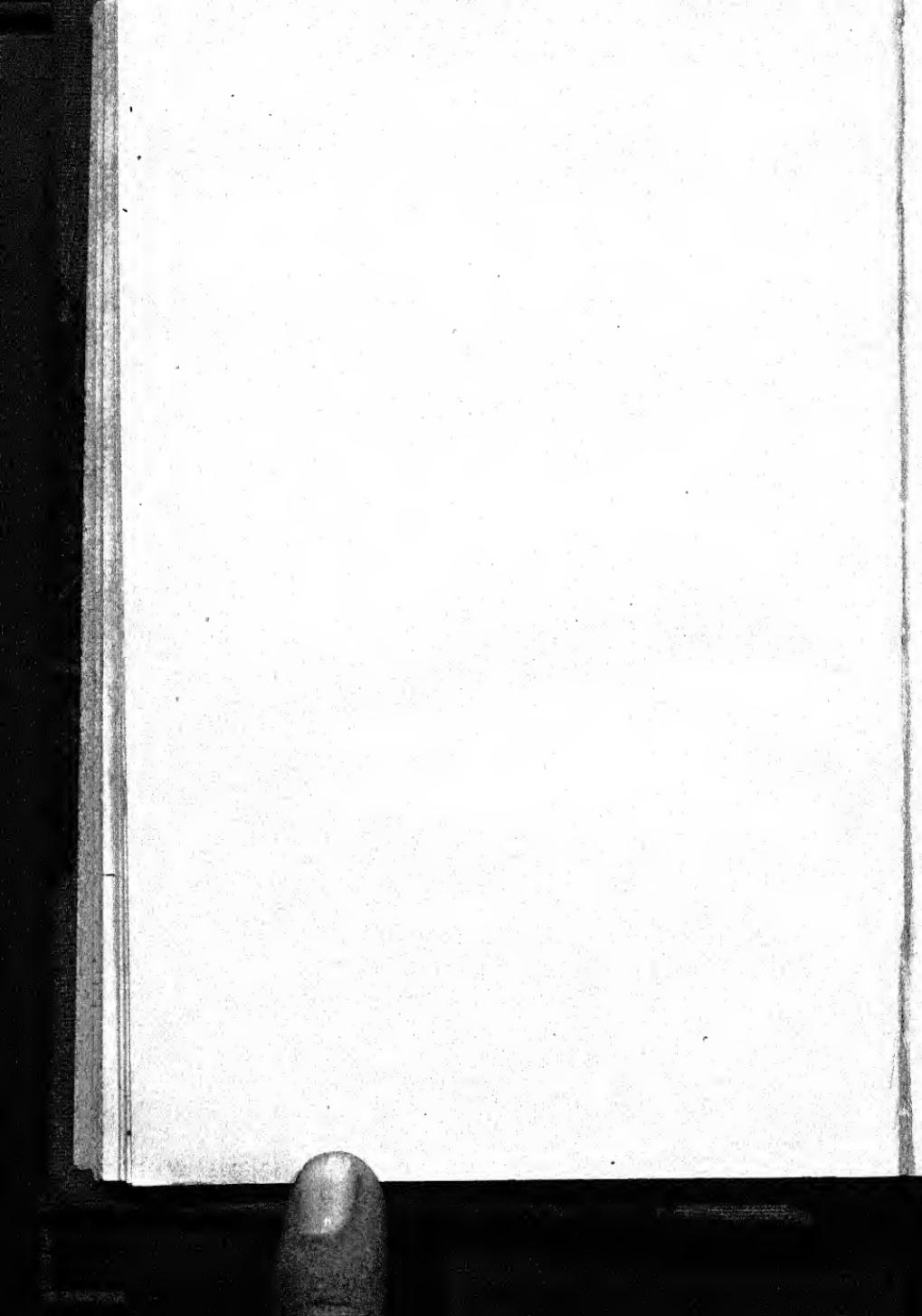
Can you give an example of one such man for ten of those of equal greatness who have not had that habit?

If great men swear at times it is a hindrance, not a help. The men whose commands are obeyed most promptly and willingly are not the loud users of profanity, but the quiet, self-contained men whose control of self gives them control of others.

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VI
LYING

“But it is not the lie that passeth thru the mind, but the lie that sinketh in and settleth in it, that doth the harm.” BACON.

“But however these things are thus in men’s depraved judgments and affections, yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the lovemaking or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign of human nature.” BACON.

“Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man’s mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.” BACON.

“It seems a very simple thing to tell the truth, but, beyond all question, there is nothing half so easy as lying.” HOLLAND.

“It is impossible for bigots, for men of one idea, for fanatics, for those who set boundaries to themselves, in religious, social, and political creeds, for men who think more of their own selfish interests than they do of truth, and for vicious men, to speak the truth.” HOLLAND.

“The getting of treasure by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.” PROVERBS, 21:6.

REFERENCES

Bacon: Of Truth.

Smiles: Character, Chap. 7.

Genesis, 31.

Accts, 5:1-11.

Jonn. 8:12-59.

VI

LYING

1. Perhaps no other moral quality affects so profoundly the stability of social institutions as that of truthfulness, including under that term both accuracy of statement and fidelity in carrying out agreements. Among business men on the stock exchange and boards of trade, transactions involving hundreds of thousands of dollars are frequently closed by merely a sign or a nod or a word, and the broker making the contract would never think of violating it or of pretending to misunderstand. The interests of business compel absolute fidelity to the agreement.

2. And yet people are often found ready to advocate trickery and inaccuracy in statements. Until late years it was popularly supposed that a good part of the business of a diplomat was to deceive the ruler of the state where he was resident; and at the present time in polite society we hear many exaggerated statements on minor matters, made for the sake of increasing the pleasantness of social intercourse, that are lightly excused as "society lies," "white lies," etc. It is desirable that every person define clearly to himself just what he understands by telling the truth or telling a lie, and that he follow unswervingly the principle which he adopts.

Is a general justified in deceiving the enemy?

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Is one of the great evils of war the encouragement of deceit?

Is an exaggerated statement of a society lady as to her pleasure in seeing a guest, which deceives no one, a lie?

Ought a ball player to let the umpire make a mistake in his favor?

Is it wrong for a catcher to draw the ball so as to deceive the umpire as to whether it crossed the plate? Why?

Is a physician justified in misleading a nervous patient regarding his condition?

3. Probably no reputation contributes more to the success of a merchant or of a business man of any kind than that of never misrepresenting his goods and never failing to keep his agreements. Probably no reputation contributes more to the success of a lawyer along many lines of practice than that of absolute trustworthiness, and yet many lawyers seek to acquire the reputation of winning cases even by means of trickery and deceit.

Do we fully trust any person whom we have ever caught deceiving us?

Do such methods pay?

Are such methods right, looked at from the point of view of the good of society?

Is there any greater blemish on the reputation of Napoleon Bonaparte than that of being an habitual liar?

Bismarck is reported to have said that he told

LYING

the truth regarding his intentions in diplomatic matters and that thereby he deceived his rivals at foreign courts most effectually.

Is the purpose or the method the criterion by which one should judge the quality of such an act?

Can one imagine a great moral or religious teacher, like Socrates, or Buddha, or Confucius, or Jesus, telling a lie?

Is this merely religious or is this a good principle from the practical business and political point of view?

Can the political boss afford to deceive?

What is the loss and gain to the pupil in presenting to the teacher a forged excuse for absence?

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VII

CHEATING AND GRAFT

“There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious.” BACON.

“He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.” PROVERBS, 10:4.

“Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings: he shall not stand before mean men.” PROVERBS, 22:9.

“Therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.” MALACHI, 2:16.

REFERENCES

Smiles: Self-Help, Chaps. 9, 10.
Genesis, 30:25-43.

VII

CHEATING AND GRAFT

1. Allied to truth-telling and to the keeping of contracts is the quality of trustworthiness and faithfulness in doing work for one's self or for others. A great employer of labor mentioned as one of the chief advantages in the employment of Chinese, that when they had once learned the way of doing a task and what was expected of them, they would work as well when their employer was absent as when he was present; whereas, he said, many Europeans and Americans worked much better under their employer's eye than when he was absent. A Chinaman's wages were placed correspondingly high. In engaging new men a reputation for faithfulness is the best recommendation.

2. In colleges and schools it is, in many cases, a not uncommon practice for students to cheat in their examinations, either by taking secretly into the class some aids or by securing assistance from other students. In these ways students frequently have succeeded in passing an examination without discovery by the teacher when otherwise they probably would have failed. Under what circumstances, if any, are such practices justifiable from the standpoint (a) of the student who considers (1) his ultimate success in life; (2) the effect upon his character; (3) the effect upon his reputation among the students? (b) From the stand-

LIFE QUESTIONS

point of the teacher. In what way is he affected?
(c) From the standpoint of the school and society. In what ways are they affected?

3. The cheating in examinations is confined primarily to the school itself. Similar practices in connection with inter-school athletics have a much wider range. Can a school afford to deceive other schools by practically hiring professional athletes, either directly contrary, technically and practically, to agreement, or, if technically correct, practically contrary to the spirit of the agreement?

Does it require bravery to take a stand for clean athletics under all circumstances? Ought such courage to be less praiseworthy than that shown on the battlefield? Which is of more consequence to the nation?

Is it of more consequence for the school to have the reputation of being successful in athletics, even by unfair means, or of being both broad and fair in athletics as well as in scholarship?

What penalty should be provided for a runner who will deliberately beat the pistol in starting? Should his school be made to suffer?

Are the students who are attracted mainly by successful, even tho unfair athletics, desirable students for the school?

Are the parents who select a school with reference to success by whatever means, instead of with reference to careful scholarship and upright dealings, desirable patrons for a school?

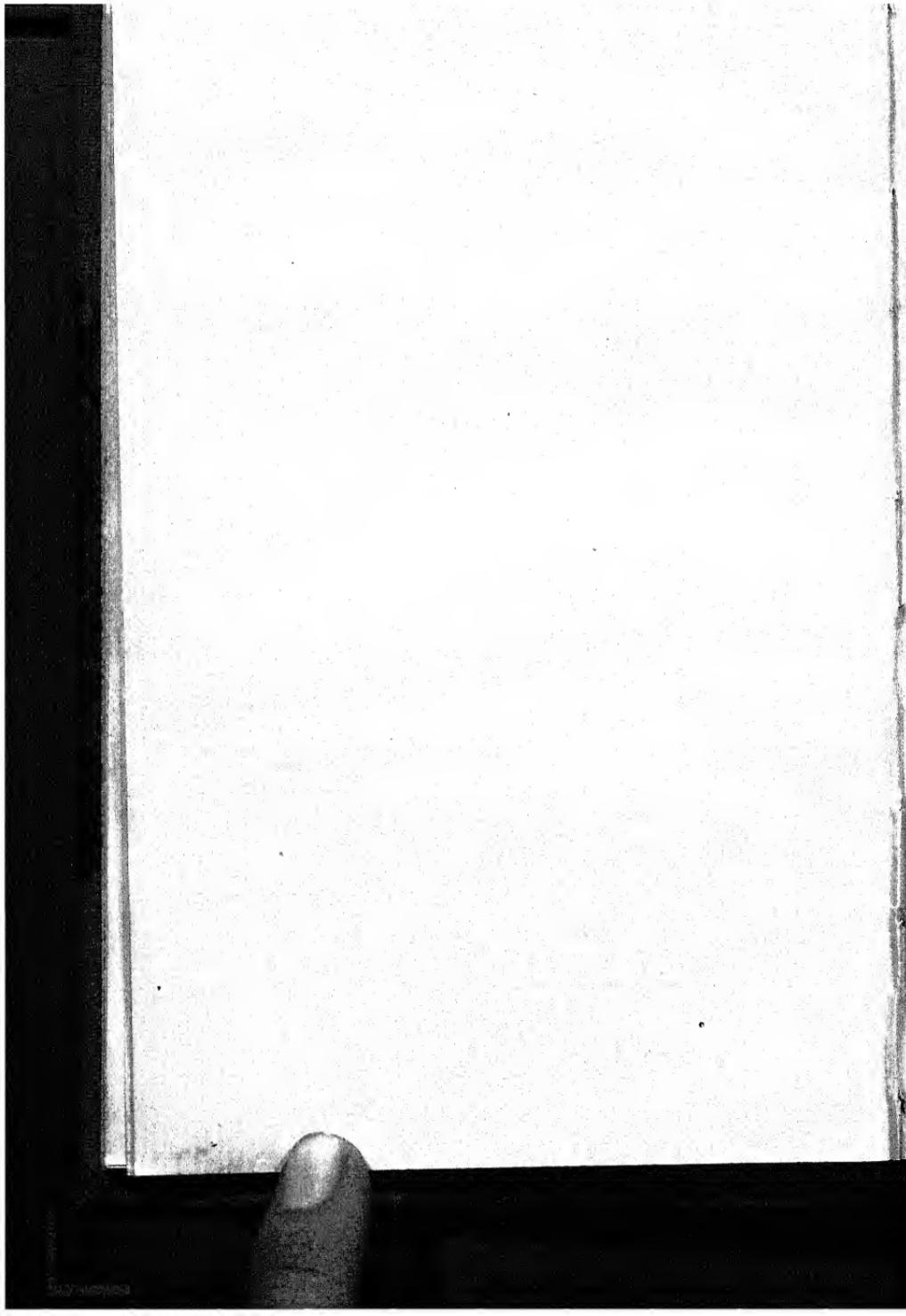
CHEATING AND GRAFT

4. How do such school practices affect one's reputation or his business habits in later life?

Let the student look up the practices of the most respected, upright men of the community when they were in school. Be careful not to confuse love of fun and mischief with dishonesty or meanness.

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VIII

GAMBLING AND BETTING

“But chiefly the mould of a man’s fortune is in his own hands.” BACON.

“Fortune is to be honored and respected, and it be but for her daughters, Confidence and Reputation.” BACON.

“Shallow men believe in luck, believe in circumstances.” “Strong men believe in cause and effect.” EMERSON.

REFERENCES

Bacon: Of Fortune.

Smiles: Self-Help, Chaps. 4, 10.

Mathews: Chap. 2.

Genesis, 37.

Matthew, 27: 35.

VIII

GAMBLING AND BETTING

1. The settlement of questions by chance is often convenient and is a means frequently employed in government. In cases of a tie election, the decision is, in some states, by chance. In games chance often decides which person shall have the selection of sides.

In what way does the settlement of a question of the kind mentioned differ from gambling?

2. In business life it is considered both right and wise to render an equivalent for everything which one receives. In making purchases or sales one expects to give or to receive one's money's worth. Owing to the different circumstances of buyer and seller, both gain by the exchange. In gambling, one party loses what the other gains, and, except in the rare cases where the sum at stake is trivial and where the pleasure of playing is equivalent to the amount lost, there is no equivalent to the loser. In consequence, the effect of gambling is exactly the same as that of robbery, except in the fact that the loser has voluntarily submitted himself to the loss and the winner has, in many cases, if not in most, had no evil intent. Experience shows, however, that when the habit of gambling becomes fixt, the consequences to the loser are not considered by the winner, and the effect is often as bad as that of robbery. In fact, the effect is often worse, because the loser, when

LIFE QUESTIONS

he acquires the gambling habit, instead of making up his loss, as in the case of robbery, and then keeping it, is sure to risk his earnings over and over again, with the practical certainty of continual loss. The gambling habit is opposed to thrift, and no community can prosper whose members are not thrifty.

Ought a man who gambles or bets on a small scale merely for fun to consider the possible effect of his example upon others, especially boys?

3. Gambling establishments always play with chances so heavily on their side that in the long run they certainly win and their customers lose. The moral effect of gambling, however, is such that, excepting in the rarest instances, the gambling is not conducted fairly, even tho the chances are in favor of the house or gambler. Cheating is common among gamblers.

What is the difference between gambling at faro or poker without cheating and dealing in futures on the boards of trade with no intention of actual purchase and sale; as when one buys 10,000 bushels of wheat to be delivered at 80 cents a bushel three months hence, not intending to take the wheat, but to pay the seller two cents for each bushel if the market price should be at that time 78 cents, and to receive the same amount from him if the price becomes 82 cents?

Has a director of a company with previous knowledge of the conditions of his business any moral right to buy or sell the stock of his own

GAMBLING AND BETTING

company with the practical certainty of gaining at the expense of the stockholders from whom he buys or to whom he sells, and for whom, it should be remembered, he is a trustee?

5. In countries where lotteries are common a very large proportion of the poorer people spend much of their earnings in buying lottery tickets. How does this custom injure society?

6. Betting.

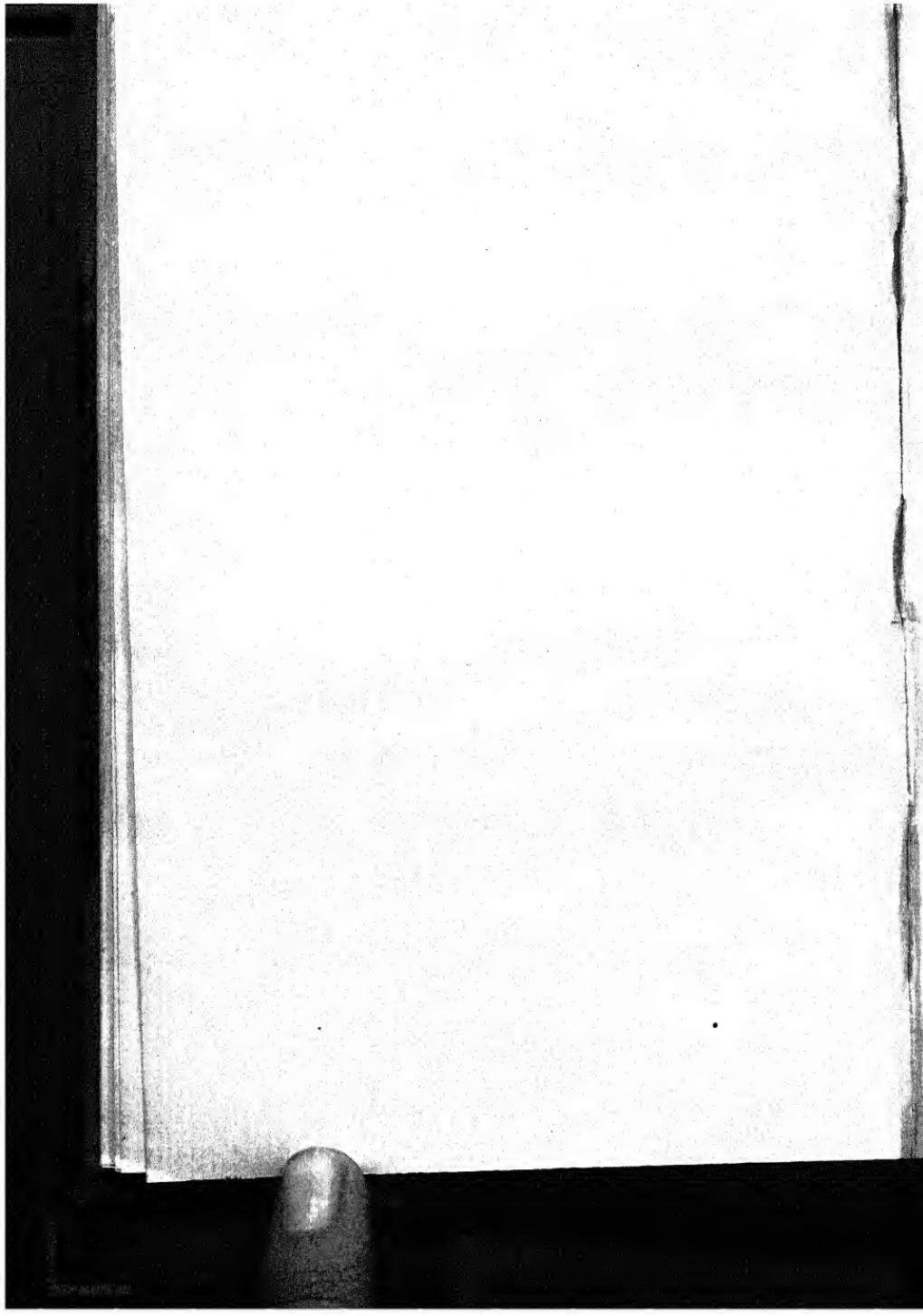
(a) Is there any essential difference in principle between gambling and betting? If so, what?

(b) What classes of people in society are in the habit of betting? Cheating at cards and playing with loaded dice are considered dishonorable. Is it honorable to bet without giving your opponent the same information which you have regarding the chances? Is such information usually given?

Enumerate the dangers to the individual of gambling and betting. Enumerate the dangers to society of gambling and betting. Is the habit a difficult one to break?

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IX
THE SEX PROBLEM

"There is no truth which personal vice will not distort." HOLLAND.

"Any nobleness begins at once to refine a man's features; any baseness or sensuality to embute them." THOREAU.

"He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend." PROVERBS, 22: 11.

"The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein." PROVERBS, 22: 14.

REFERENCES

- Bacon: Of Beauty.
- Genesis, 39: 1-23.
- I Cor., 3: 16-17.
- I Cor., 5: 9-13; 6.
- Proverbs, 7.

IX

THE SEX PROBLEM

1. During their school days the attitude of boys toward girls is likely to change very materially. It is extremely desirable both for the boys and for the community that the naturally increasing interest in the other sex be a source of benefit instead of a detriment.

2. Most boys believe in and have a chivalrous feeling of championship for the honor and happiness of their mothers and sisters. They will fight for them gladly.

Is it not well for them to bear continually in mind the fact that most girls are the sisters and the daughters of persons whose lives would be made wretched by serious misconduct on their part?

3. Most boys during their school years become aware of the fact that there are girls who make their living by pandering to the passions of men. Some of these girls have been led into this life by the deceit and trickery and meanness and vileness of men who have deliberately misled them for their own gratification and have then abandoned them to a life of misfortune and dishonor. Others have been practically trained as children for this life and have been kept purposely or by unfortunate circumstances in such surroundings that they are not conscious of guilt in their actions. Nevertheless, they find themselves under the condemnation

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of society and subjected to a life which is practically certain to bring them unhappiness and disease, and to make them outcasts. A very large proportion of these girls are practically slaves who are allowed to retain no part of their earnings, all of which goes into the pockets of their criminal masters.

Association with such girls is very likely, if common it is practically certain, to bring disease, often incurable; and it is certain to bring a boy into immoral and contaminating surroundings which, if he continues, will eventually wreck his opportunities for usefulness and success.

Does it pay to yield to inclinations which result so certainly in evil?

Does it ever pay to yield one's power of self-control?

4. Nearly every young man looks forward, and properly, to a married life and to happiness with a family.

Can a man with a clear conscience associate himself with a pure woman as intimately as in marriage if he has been tempted into the contaminating associations connected with an impure life?

Is it not worth while, for the sake of the future permanent happy family relationships, for young men to keep control of their lives when boys? They should not confound passion with love.

5. Passion needs to be kept well in hand or the habit of self-abuse may lead to results almost or

THE SEX PROBLEM

quite as harmful to the individual as illicit relations.

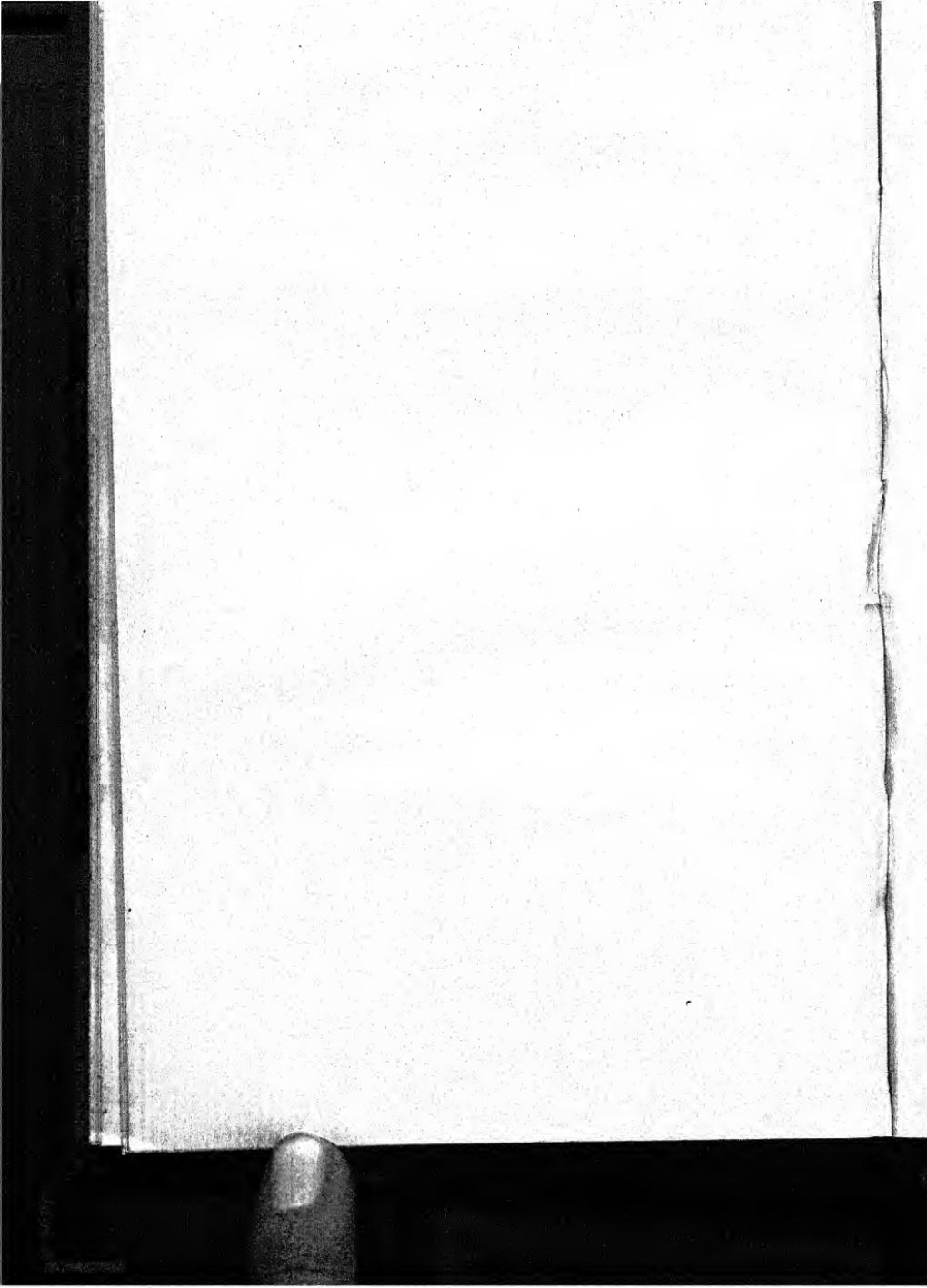
Excess in any of these directions leads to physical weakness as well as to mental and moral degeneracy. An athlete must be continent and abstemious in all ways.

6. A large part of the temptations to illicit relationships and a large part of the evil associations connected therewith are brought about by loose talk, vile stories, and impure thinking regarding the relations of the sexes.

Is it not better worth while to keep the physical condition sound and the mental and spiritual attitude clean and sane by active association with people of the right type of both sexes whose influence will be toward clean and moral enjoyments?

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X

ATTITUDE TOWARD WORK

"Kites rise against, not with, the wind. No man ever worked his passage anywhere in a dead calm."

NEAL, by Mathews.

"A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent." PROVERBS, 28: 20.

REFERENCES

Bacon: Of Ambition; Of Dispatch.

Mathews: Chaps. 14, 15.

Smiles: Character, Chaps. 4, 12.

Proverbs, 24.

Luke, 19: 11-28.

X

ATTITUDE TOWARD WORK

1. Workingmen generally are anxious to get their wages increased, and they properly take measures to get as good wages as possible. With this desire, however, is sometimes combined that to render the least possible service without losing their place. Workingmen frequently are very prompt at the quitting hour, less eager at beginning.

Is this fair?

Is this wise?

The employer, on the other hand, attempts to get more than a fair day's work without paying more.

Is this fair or wise?

2. Where the work is interesting, or where the workingman has a peculiar professional pride, his endeavor is often to render the best service possible under the conditions without much regard to the wages or money returns.

In this case, may the enjoyment of the work itself be looked upon as part of the compensation?

3. If a person desires promotion or an increase in pay, will it not be practically impossible for the employer to promote him or to increase the pay until the workman is earning more than his wages? As a practical matter, then, must not the ambitious workman lay his emphasis upon the quality

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and amount of service rendered, rather than upon the pay received?

Ought not the employer to be ready to increase wages promptly when unusually good service is rendered?

4. Aside from the question of the work done, owing to our human nature we all like the spirit of cheerfulness and willingness on the part of those associated with us. In consequence, in selecting men for promotion the employer is more likely, other things being equal, to take the willing worker, even though the quality of the work done is not superior.

Is he to be blamed for so doing?

5. Some workmen are disposed to do faithfully just what they are told, but to make no effort to go beyond instructions and think out new plans for themselves which will render their work more efficient and more valuable to their employer. Others are inclined toward reliance upon self and to originality in thinking out methods of work.

How far can individual originality be permitted in the case of men working together interdependently?

Is the employer ordinarily glad to see individual initiative on the part of his workmen? Why? How far?

Does a good living and prosperity come oftener from high wages or from a habit of saving? Distinguish carefully between stinginess and thrift.

What is the difference between a generous man

ATTITUDE TOWARD WORK

and a spendthrift? Which does most harm to the community, a stingy man or a spendthrift?

6. The principles laid down above and the questions with reference to workingmen and their employers apply in part to work in school, but with some very important differences. Point out the differences.

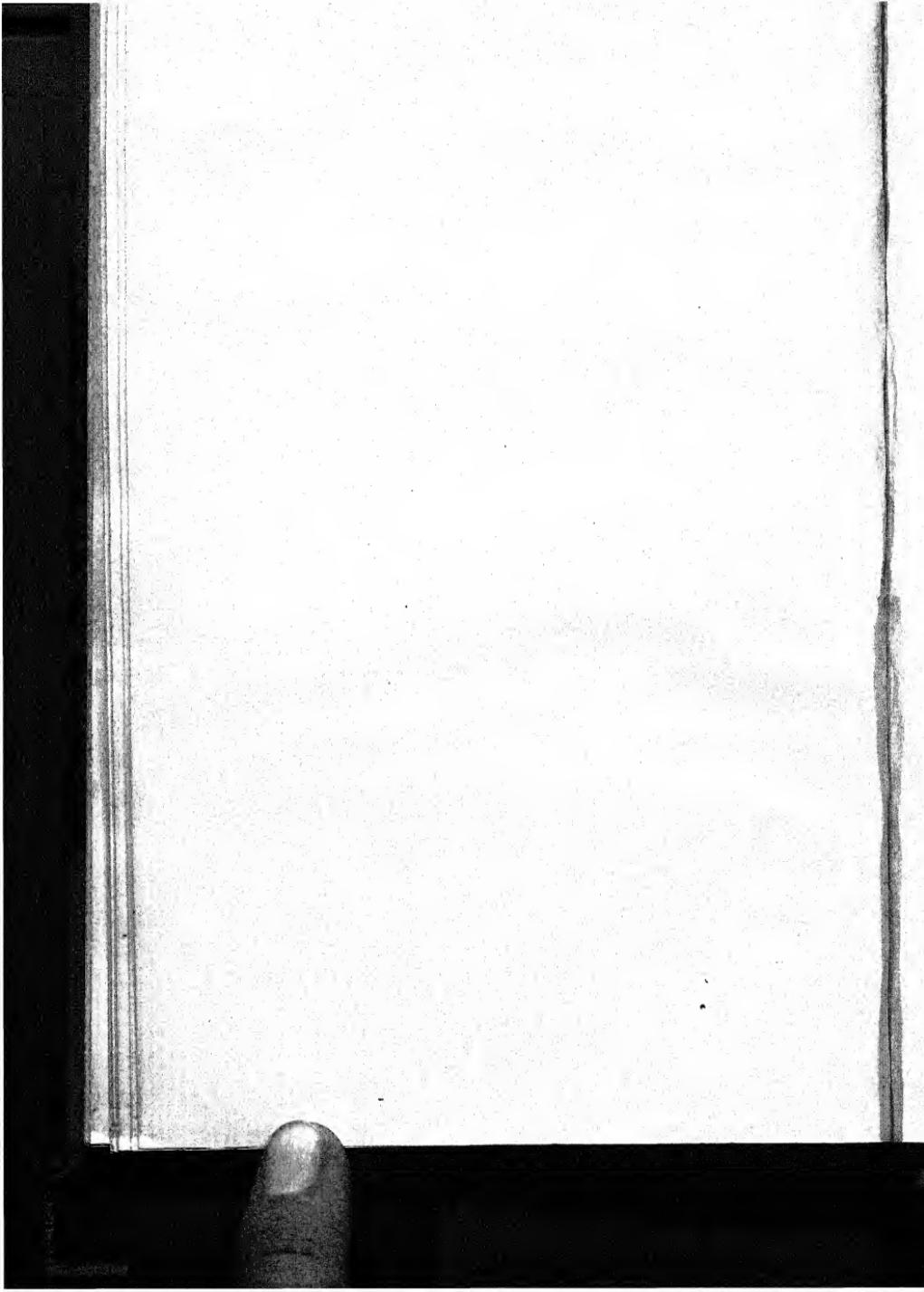
How far is the teacher the gainer, how far the loser, by the faithful or unfaithful work of pupils?

Is the pupil the gainer or the loser by faithful or unfaithful work?

Have the successful men in all lines kept their work or their pay first in mind?

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XI

THE SELF-CENTERED MAN

"Whosoever in the frame of his nature and affections, is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast, and not from humanity." BACON.

"Speech of man's self ought to be seldom, and well chosen." BACON.

"Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge." SHAKSPEERE.

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him." PROVERBS 24: 12.

REFERENCES

Bacon: Of Discourse.

Mathews: Chaps. 11, 13.

Smiles: Character, Chaps. 8, 9.

Luke, 18.

XI

THE SELF-CENTERED MAN

1. Most persons are inclined to think much of themselves and of their own interests. Many people are very unwise and short-sighted in seeing clearly what is, in the long run, for their own best interests.

With the exception of dishonesty and untrustworthiness, there is perhaps no personal characteristic which stands more in the way of ultimate success than self-conceit, undue pride in one's own possessions and powers. Usually the conceited person is narrow-minded and mentally short-sighted. The man who sees himself accurately in his relations with others ordinarily knows that, however able and wise he may be, there are many others still abler, more experienced, and wiser. Even the greatest man at the head of his profession, if he thinks carefully, knows that, great as his knowledge may be, the extent of his ignorance even in his chosen field is probably much greater. The range of the problems of nature and society is so nearly infinite that the most accomplished by man in any direction seems small when compared with that still left to be accomplished. Sir Isaac Newton, near the close of his life, spoke of himself in relation to his scientific attainments as a little child playing upon the beach, picking up a shell here, a pretty pebble there, with the great ocean of truth still unexplored before him.

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2. Too many people hesitate to give credit to others for the good work they do, apparently being jealous lest the good work of others should detract from their own credit. Even presidents of colleges, heads of corporations, managers of a great business, sometimes claim the credit of work done by their subordinates. Such action is unwise, because, first, the head of any enterprise is always given credit for its success, whoever does the work; and, second, such action lessens the enthusiasm, and, in consequence, the efficiency of the subordinates, and checks success.

3. A person who does good work ordinarily needs to make little effort to secure credit for himself. People are generally willing to give credit where it is due; and people are always eager to get work done by those who are most efficient. Excellent work in any line makes an immediate demand for more work from the same individual. There is no kind of credit for work so certain or so satisfactory as the requests and demands for more work of the same kind from the same person. Moreover, a continual demand for recognition is likely to arouse prejudice and hostility, so that it often defeats its own purpose.

4. Without reference to the question of individual claim for credit or willingness to give credit to others for good work, it is often very desirable to give one's time and energy to the service of some worthy cause or to the public. Much of

THE SELF-CENTERED MAN

the best work in the world is done to further some social or religious reform with no thought of personal reward on the part of the worker; and yet a reward is ordinarily obtained in, first, the consciousness of an honest attempt at good service, and, second, frequently, in the consciousness of having attained the end sought for.

What pay did Socrates get for his efforts to reform Greece?

What special dangers in high school life are there in the direction of self-conceit?

Do any boys dress beyond their means to gratify their vanity?

Is there much snobbishness in your school?

Are there any who think more highly of themselves than they ought to think? Who?

Are you one of them?

If you are superior to some of your fellows in some regards, is the credit due to you personally or to surrounding circumstances?

Is the conceited or self-centered man more likely to be stingy or to be a spendthrift? Is he likely to be a generous man?

If you had been born in a hovel and reared among petty thieves, what reason have you for thinking that you would not be a pickpocket?

If you were, ought you not to be arrested and punished? Why?

How are doers of unselfish deeds paid; for example, the man who rescues a drowning person at the risk, possibly the cost, of his own life?

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XII

SOCIAL SERVICE IN THE COMMUNITY

“ ‘Tis the fine souls that serve us, and not what is called fine society.” **EMERSON.**

“Mankind divides itself into two classes,—benefactors and malefactors. The second class is vast, the first a handful.” **EMERSON.**

“Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people.” **PROVERBS, 14: 34.**

REFERENCES

Emerson: *Experience.*

Matthew, 5; 6; 7.

Smiles: *Self-Help*, Chap. 1.

XII

SOCIAL SERVICE IN THE COMMUNITY

1. People frequently assume that in their relations with the public and the state they may apply a different standard of honesty from that which they have in their relations with private individuals. Persons who would not steal from individuals or cheat in private business will often smuggle, altho that is depriving the state of property to which it has a legal right. The state must have a certain amount of income. If one individual pays to the government less than his fair share of the taxes, other people must pay more than their fair share. The effect, then, of tax-dodging is practically the same as taking money from the pockets of one's neighbors.

2. Properties belonging to the public, like schoolhouses, parks, streets, etc., in effect belong to all the individuals in the community taken as a unit. If a student destroys school property, is he practically destroying the property of his parents and neighbors?

If a person realizes that he is a member of the community which owns the streets and parks, and that they are under the charge of officers chosen either directly or indirectly by his parents or himself to care for them, will he not naturally take a pride in keeping them in good order? Will he not take a pride in keeping the parks beautiful, enjoying their flowers and trees?

LIFE QUESTIONS

If a park belongs to the people of a community, why has not each individual in the community a right to pick flowers from the park at will? Under what conditions could this properly be done?

3. Inasmuch as we do not like to see suffering and as it is more convenient for the people in the community to make contributions fairly thru the government, there has gradually grown up in civilized communities the recognition of the duty of the public to support the helpless poor and unfortunate. In consequence, taxes are levied for their support, almshouses are built, and the public thru properly chosen officers cares for many unfortunates. The receipt of aid under most circumstances from others who are not under obligation to give it, as are members of the family, has been found, in most cases, to have an injurious effect upon people who are able to earn their own living. It is a way of getting something for nothing which is often as demoralizing to the character as is gambling. It is, therefore, often better for the individuals, as well as for the public, for assistance to be given in the way of furnishing work or in the way of friendship, rather than by giving public charity.

Is there danger of being too generous? Under what circumstances?

Is it not desirable that these facts and these principles be understood by the students in the high school, and that they begin some of their duties as citizens by investigating, as best they

SOCIAL SERVICE IN THE COMMUNITY

can, the cases of suffering in the community and taking a personal part in the relief of such suffering? In many cases, perhaps in most cases, the personal touch with those who are unfortunate is most helpful to all persons concerned.

4. Of greater danger to the community than the unfortunate paupers, are those who are criminals or who are criminally inclined. We are all of us likely to blame the criminal and the depraved, but beyond doubt in very many cases the tendency toward crime has come from the surroundings in youth of the individual who, under different circumstances, would never have become criminal. A very large number of those who lead lives innocent of crime would doubtless have been criminals, or perhaps would even now become criminals, were the circumstances changed so that they were brought under severe temptation, and particularly so if the pressure of public opinion, instead of holding them from crime, should impel them toward crime, as is often the case with the real criminal. Under these circumstances, ought not young people in the public schools to consider with some care the circumstances surrounding criminals, or surrounding those whose lives, while not contrary to law, are, nevertheless, contrary to public opinion regarding good morals and good habits?

Is not a special social duty laid upon those who are receiving from the public the blessings of education?

LIFE QUESTIONS

May not high school pupils do much toward uplifting the moral tone of the community if they see the nature of the influences which drag people down, and endeavor both for themselves and for their fellows to change the unfortunate circumstances which tend toward degradation? Such work can often be done best in connection with the churches, but at times much can be done independently.

It would be well to have the boys make some brief study of institutions dealing with the unfortunate and criminal, as well as of special schools, such as the George Junior Republic. A visit to an almshouse, a boys' reformatory, a juvenile court, would be helpful, especially if, in each instance, an attempt were made to get the personal history of individual cases, so as to note the influences leading to misfortune or degradation.

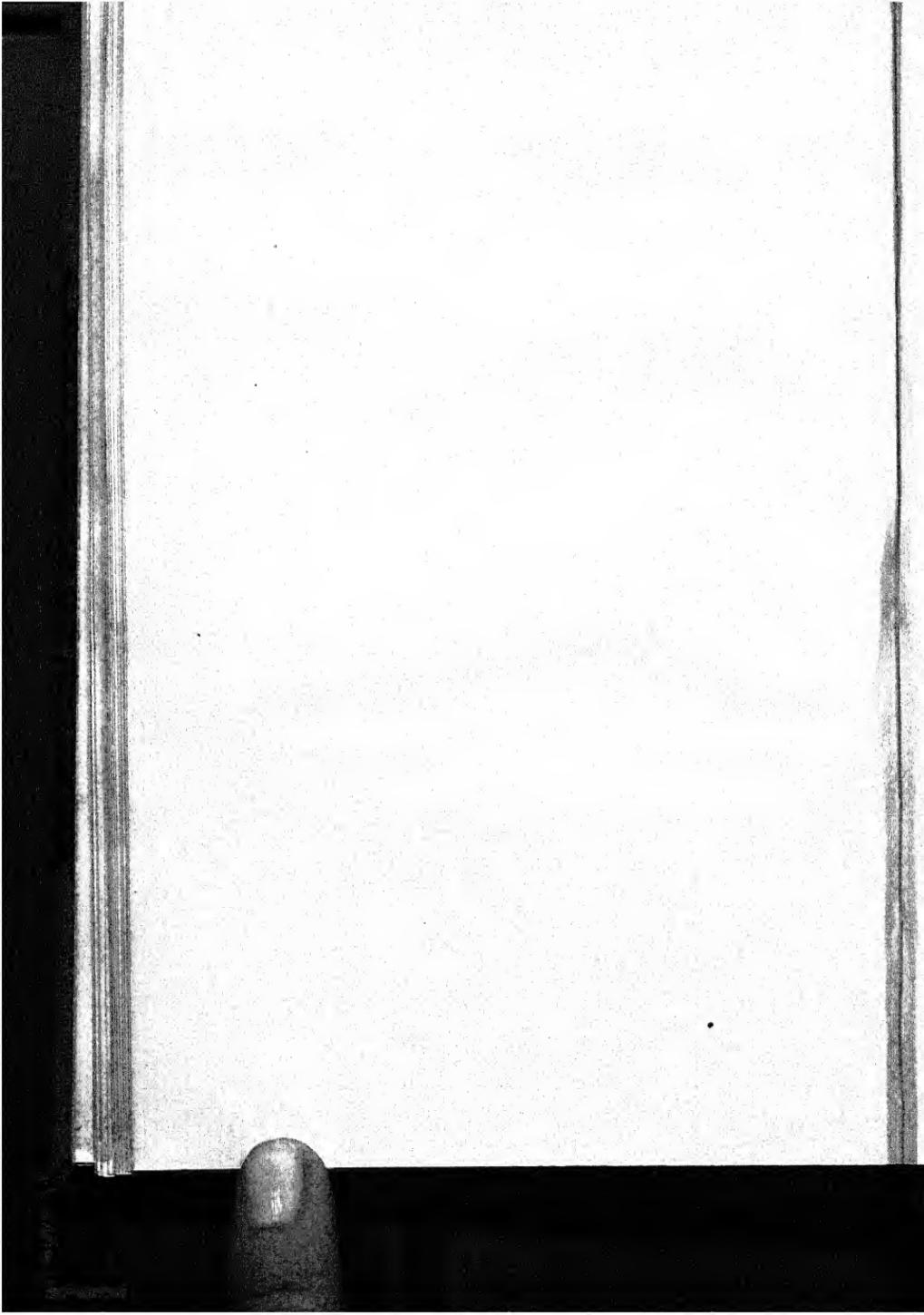
How much of a part have saloons, pool rooms, brothels, played in producing pauperism, immorality, crime?

How far do the high school boys put themselves under like influences?

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XIII
POLITICS

"Everything feels the new breath (courage), except the old doting, nigh-dead politicians, whose heart the trumpet of resurrection could not wake." EMERSON.

"We see insurmountable multitudes obeying, in opposition to their strongest passions, the restraints of a power which they scarcely perceive, and the crimes of a single individual marked and punished at the distance of half the earth." EMERSON.

"We shall one day learn to supercede polities by education."

"A politician weakly and amiably in the right is no match for a politician tenaciously and pugnaciously in the wrong." WHIPPLE.

"Happy is that people that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." PSALMS, 144: 15.

REFERENCES

- Emerson: Courage, Politics.
- Lowell: Politics.
- Lowell: Democracy.
- Luke, 20.

XIII

POLITICS

1. As soon as an individual attempts to take part in the civil life of the community by bringing influence to bear upon the government, either directly or thru taking part in the choice of public officials, he is taking part in polities and is, to some degree, a politician. The welfare of the community is bound up so closely in the nature of the government which controls our schools, our prisons, our highways, our churches, our social institutions of all kinds, that every good citizen ought to inform himself carefully regarding the nature of problems which must be dealt with by government and regarding the way in which governmental affairs are carried on.

Can a person be a good citizen without taking an active part in politics? If so, under what circumstances? Did Jesus take part in the political movements of his day? Why did he follow that plan?

Can a person be a good citizen without being a good man? Why?

2. In most communities persons are chosen to office thru the active work of political parties; and beyond question in our country persons can do their political work, under most circumstances, more efficiently thru the medium of a party than by acting independently.

LIFE QUESTIONS

How many political parties are there in the community, and what are they?

What part does the political party play in electing men to office?

Does an officer chosen largely thru the influence of a political party owe any special allegiance to that party or is his allegiance to the public as a whole? Is the party supposed to exist for the sake of the public or for the sake of its own members?

3. A political party exists for the purpose of carrying out certain principles of governmental work. Usually on every question over which political parties divide there is a great deal to be said on both sides. If a person keeps the welfare of the state in mind, he is often greatly puzzled to know with which party he should work in order to obtain the best results. Sometimes even the party itself changes its attitude on a public question under the influence of a change of leadership. In consequence, it is desirable, if a person is to do his full duty as a citizen and maintain his self-respect as a man, that he think over carefully the issues of the day that separate political parties.

4. But, owing to the tendency of men to follow custom and to do little original thinking, a person who once joins a political party usually remains with it, even tho the party managers have changed the principles which they will follow. Every thoroly self-respecting person should endeavor to

POLITICS

think out the issues of each election as carefully as possible and to act accordingly.

5. Is it a desirable thing for a young man, before he becomes a voter, to identify himself with any political party by marching in party processions, assisting in bringing voters to the polls, or otherwise? Why?

Is there any danger that a person, by holding his judgment on party questions in abeyance until he becomes a voter, will fall into the habit of indecision so that his character will be weakened?

6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of discussing political questions in high school debating clubs or classes?

How far should a person receive favors from party managers; for example, his expenses in going home to vote; pay for working at the polls, etc.? Why?

7. Let the young men report on the different political organizations in the neighborhood, their leaders, modes of work, etc.

Let them report on the issues of any election and see whether, in their judgment, the voters are swayed by their cool study of these issues or by prejudice.

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XIV
SUCCESS

"I cannot call riches better than the baggage of virtue." * * * * "Of great riches there is no real use, except it be in the distribution; the rest is but conceit." BACON.

"I confess that increasing years bring with them an increasing respect for men who do not succeed in life as those words are commonly used." HILLARD, by Mathews.

"O Keep me innocent! Make others great."
"To know

That which before us lies in daily life
Is the prime wisdom." MILTON.

REFERENCES

Emerson: Success.

Bacon: Of Riches.

Mathews: Getting on in the World, Chap. 21.
Psalms, 128.

Matthew, 4: 1-11.

XIV

SUCCESS

1. Most young men, very properly, look for success in life. The whole course of their training and activity will be determined by the view they have of what constitutes success. Inasmuch as it is essential in a civilized community for a person, in order to live, to secure an income sufficient to pay for food and clothing and shelter and the other necessities of life, people are likely to think of success first as the acquirement of a fortune, larger or smaller.

Can the ordinary man of reasonable health and ability be considered either a good citizen or a good man unless he fits himself for acquiring a good livelihood?

Is there any principle by which a person can determine in youth the income that will be suitable for him in middle age?

Is it desirable to attempt to fix a limit to the fortune which a man should strive to acquire?

2. Many people prize influence over others or influence in the community more than they prize wealth, or they value wealth on account of the influence which it gives. Consider the men in the community where you live whose opinions are prized and who are men of chief influence. What are the sources of their influence? Wealth? Good fellowship? Sound judgment? Good character? Unselfishness?

LIFE QUESTIONS

How far should one consciously make influence the test of success in life?

3. Some philosophers, and a good many persons not philosophers, judging by their teachings and acts, have looked upon happiness or content as the chief aim in life; in consequence as the best criterion of success.

Is content or happiness a matter primarily of the things which one possesses, of the work that one does, of one's personal disposition, of one's health?

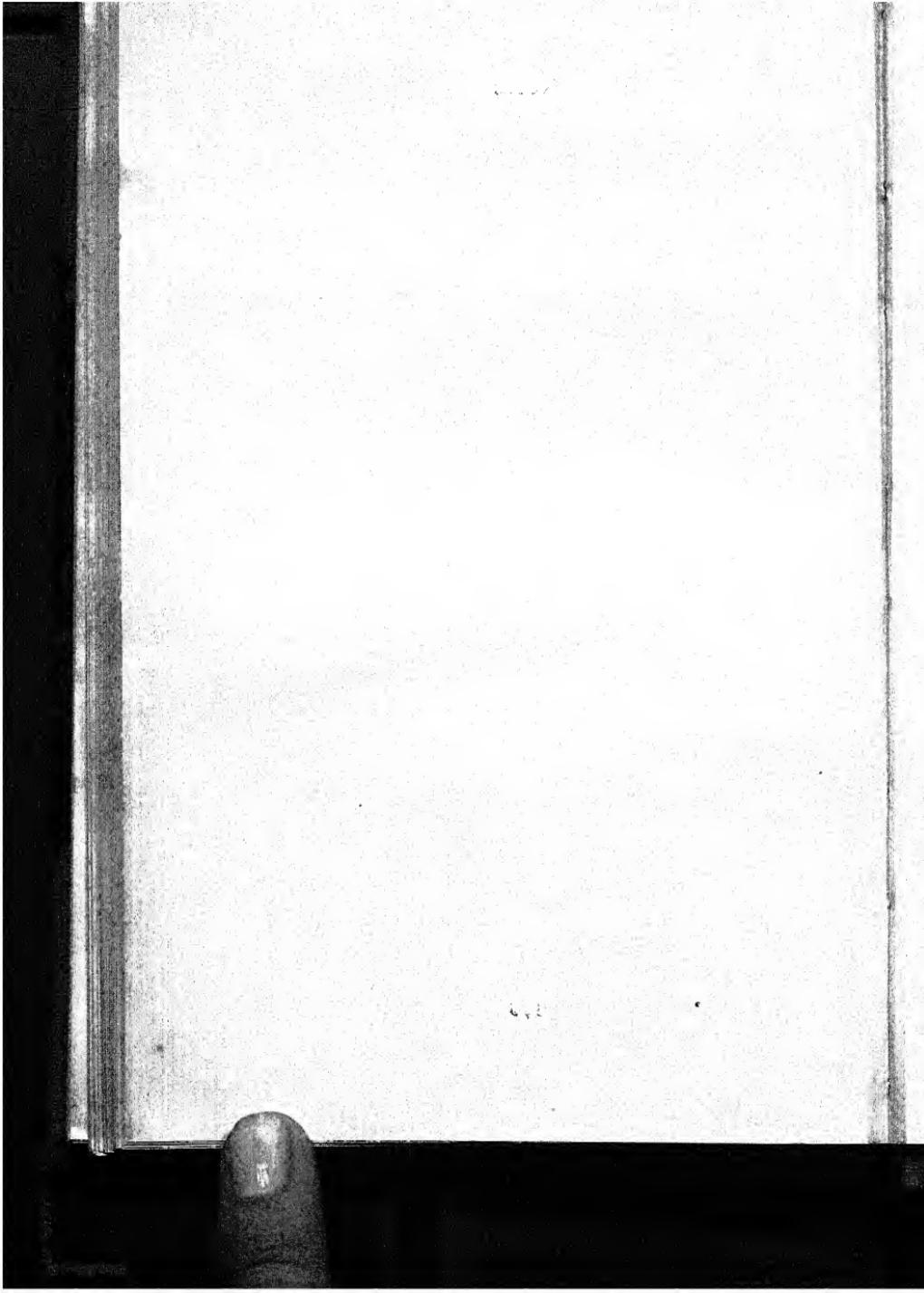
How far is content with one's lot compatible with progress?

4. The idea of success in life that seems to be set up in the Bible thru the life and teachings of Jesus is service to other people. How far is this consistent with wealth getting? With extending one's influence in the community? With securing happiness or content?

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XV

RELIGION

"It is true, that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion." BACON.

"The broad ethics of Jesus were quickly narrowed to village theologies, which preach on election or favoritism."

"The way to judge of religion is by doing our duty. Religion is rather a divine life than a divine knowledge. In heaven, indeed, we must first see, and then love; but here, on earth, we must first love, and love will open our eyes as well as our hearts, and we shall then see, and perceive, and understand." SMILES.

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James, 1.

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1. By a man's religion is meant his relationship with God; or his view of his relationship to any power that he believes in which is superhuman. The nature of his religion, therefore, is likely to depend very largely upon what has been taught him in his youth, upon the degree of his intelligence, upon the extent of his knowledge of life, and upon his surroundings. A man's religion is thus likely to be a growth changing and developing with increasing years and experience.

2. To a good many people religion seems to be primarily a matter of thinking, of believing, and not a matter of living. But the men who have had the greatest influence in history along religious lines are those whose views of their relation to God have affected profoundly their lives, and have determined what they should do in life. A person's view of God is, of course, determined largely by his idea of what is highest and best in life.

Would it be possible for an untutored savage to take the same view of God as a highly trained civilized man?

In what respects would the views of God of, let us say, a cannibal differ from those of a cultivated American, even tho both might be Christians?

3. If a person's view of his duty to God affects his daily life, is it likely to force upon him many sacrifices? If so, what will be the nature of such

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sacrifices? Must he give up pleasures? If so, what kinds?

Must he give up certain plans of making a livelihood? If so, what kinds of plans?

Must he change his ambition for success in life? If so, how?

What comfort or active enjoyments come or ought to come from one's religious belief?

How far is a man's religion a matter of this life? How far is it intimately connected with the life to come, regardless of this life?

Are religious practices primarily acts of church worship or deeds of active service for others? Upon which did Jesus lay most emphasis?

What acts of your daily life have a religious character? Studying? Giving to the poor? Playing ball? Helping your parents?

4. It would seem as if the relationship of a man to his God ought to be a source of enjoyment, of satisfaction; and yet this would depend very largely upon his view of the nature of his God. In many cases savages have looked upon their gods as avenging deities who needed to be propitiated or bought, and their chief sentiment toward their gods has been that of fear; so that little or no enjoyment came from such relationship, unless they thought by sacrifice they had secured safety.

In most civilized Christian communities the thought of the nature of God is different. Since Jesus Christ came into the world his acts and character have largely made the ideals of good-

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ness, and in consequence have created the conceptions of God that are found in the minds of Christian peoples. In that way at least he is the revealer of God, the incarnation of Godhood. Unless men can get a higher conception of goodness than is found in Jesus Christ, the Christian religion must stand. It will stand.

With the life of Jesus Christ embodying all that is best and noblest in our ideals, and with the teachings of Jesus forming the foundation of the best in our civilization and in our lives, can we do better than to make this life and these teachings the subject of regular thoughtful study?

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